

# UN Sunday 2013



## Sex, Love, and Violence: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in a Globalized World

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# United Nations 101

## Introducing the United Nations

With the scourge of war heavy on hearts and minds following World War II, 51 countries met in San Francisco to create the United Nations, where they drafted and signed its Charter. When these 51 countries signed the Charter on 24 October 1945, they became *member states* of the United Nations and committed their governments and peoples to “maintain international peace and security” as well as the Charter’s other purposes and principles. When *states* become *members* of the United Nations, they agreed to accept the many obligations of the UN Charter<sup>1</sup>.

Much of the UN’s work sets normative frameworks, advancing global thoughts and policies, which governments must take upon themselves to implement. One of the most important purposes in the Charter to remember when thinking about the purpose of the United Nations is the fourth: “to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.”

A common misunderstanding is that the UN is a director of action or change or that it has power over states. Much like elected or appointed officials in a city or province draft legislation in the interest of their local constituents, UN delegates from different countries deliberate law and legislation at the international level. Governments draft, debate, and vote for or against treaties, conventions, or action plans discussed at the UN.

The entire budget for the United Nations is financed by dues and voluntary contributions from member states. There are 193 member states in the United Nations (the newest member state is Republic of South Sudan, 14 July 2011). In addition, the Holy See and the Palestinian Authority have observer status, which means that they have speaking rights, but no voting rights. Working with such a diversity of peoples requires a large full-time translation team, and the UN works in six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

## Purposes of the United Nations

- To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace;
- To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
- To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Charter: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

## WHAT IS A UN SUNDAY?

The United Nations was founded in 1945 as a global association of governments that facilitates cooperation in international law, security, economic development, and social equality. With aims to protect human rights and achieve world peace, it is a center for governments to communicate and develop strategies to reach these ends. Since 1947, 24 October has been called United Nations Day to commemorate the anniversary of the UN's creation. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending that the day be observed as a public holiday by member states.

In celebration of this annual event, the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office invites congregations and individual UUs to deepen their understanding of the United Nations by devoting one service in October to reaffirming the connections between our UU principles and the vital issues dealt with at the UN. Usually, congregations organize a UN Sunday for the last Sunday in October, but any Sunday in October (or any month) would be better than no Sunday at all. The theme for the UN Sunday service follows the theme for that year's Intergenerational Spring Seminar which in 2013 is Sex, Love, and Violence: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in a Globalized World.

We encourage ministers, lay leaders, and youth and adult envoys to take advantage of our prepared materials and/or develop their own ideas for a UN Sunday service. Consider enlisting a UU-UNO Envoy or a special UN speaker to present the sermon. We especially encourage a multigenerational service, including children, youth, young adults, adults, and seniors working together in the preparation and execution of UN Sunday. Our UN Religious Education curriculum (UN Me) is available on our UN Sunday webpage: [www.uua.org/unsunday](http://www.uua.org/unsunday). Further, we urge congregations to organize related religious education sessions. On our website, a short insightful history of UN DAY and UU history at the UN is an additional great resource to use. Visit [www.uua.org/unsunday](http://www.uua.org/unsunday) and download "They called it UN DAY" by UU lawyer Frank B. Frederick who was involved in the creation of UN Day and the UU-UNO.

Finally, we ask congregations to consider dedicating their UN Sunday offering plate to the important work of the UU-UNO (a tax deductible not-for-profit organization) and to inform fellow UUs of the benefits of contributing to the UU-UNO. The UU-UN Office exists to provide a unique Unitarian Universalist perspective at the United Nations. We depend on individual and congregational support. We need your involvement, your engagement, and your enthusiastic support to help us bring our UU voice to the UN. We can help to change the world so that every person enjoys a safe and dignified life. Thank you for participating in UN Sunday!

## LGBTQ Rights at the UN

To date, the General Assembly of the United Nations has not passed a declaration regarding LGBTQ rights. On December 18, 2008, a statement supporting an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was presented at the General Assembly by the Government of Argentina on behalf of 66 nations under the coordination of France and the Netherlands. Today, there are 94 countries in support of the non-discrimination statement. A counter-resolution was presented by the Government of Syria backed by 54 nations, including the Arab League and Organization of Islamic Countries, several Eastern European and African nations. Both resolutions remain open for signatures and neither has yet to be put to a vote of the UN General Assembly.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly consisting of 47 seats, to which member-states are elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms. The UNHRC holds regular sessions three times a year and special sessions as needed to address human rights issues around the world. In 2011, South Africa proposed a resolution in the UNHRC calling for the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights to compile a report describing the situations of LGBTQ people around the world. The resolution passed 23-19 (with three countries abstaining, one country not voting, and one country suspended). The UNHRC resolution called for the first-ever UN report to document global violence against people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the report in December 2011, which documented hate crimes, criminalization, and discrimination faced by LGBTQ people worldwide. This report was drafted by Charles Radcliffe. The UU-UNO had early on identified Charles as a person who was very helpful on LGBTQ issues. As we and others persisted in going to Charles for help, the High Commissioner created a new position dealing with these issues and put Charles in charge. He is responsible for the only official UN report on violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In 2012, the Social, Humanitarian Cultural Affairs Committee of the UN General Assembly, also known as the Third Committee, passed a resolution condemning extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions. Although similar resolutions had been passed before, this was the first time such a resolution included gender identity in the list of discriminatory reasons for executions. The resolution also reversed a 2010 vote which attempted to remove reference to sexual orientation from the resolution. The UU-UNO led civil society in support of a diplomatic initiative led by the United States which successfully restored sexual orientation to the resolution. Prior to the resolution's passing, the United Arab Emirates, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, presented an amendment that would have removed reference to sexual orientation and gender identity from the resolution and substituted "or for any other reason." Because of UU-UNO leadership of Civil Society in support of the U.S. Mission to reverse the previously passed UN General Assembly amendment to remove "sexual orientation," the amendment was defeated with 44 votes in favor, 86 against, 31 abstentions, and 32 absent, thus reinstating "sexual orientation" as an area of UN concern for extra-judicial killings around the world.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is an outspoken supporter of LGBTQ equality. In an [April 2013 video message to the Oslo Conference on Human Rights](#), Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity, he said that religion, culture, and tradition can never be excuses for denying LGBTQ people basic human rights. He promised to denounce attacks against LGBTQ people and to keep pressing world leaders for progress.

## SEX, LOVE, AND VIOLENCE: SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

As Unitarian Universalists, we strive to make the world a better place for all. Our first principle affirms and promotes the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Around the world, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) people can face discrimination, imprisonment, and even death because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Acknowledging the real and pressing need to address these issues, the theme of our 2013 Annual Intergenerational Spring Seminar was "Sex, Love, and Violence: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in a Globalized World." During the Seminar, we had two excellent keynote speakers as well as many amazing panelists who drew from both personal and professional experiences, sharing knowledge and perspective to empower participants. Voices of faiths were uplifted at the UN, discussing and denouncing religious condemnation of same sex relations and marginalized gender identities.

At the end of the seminar, participants worked together to draft a statement that was presented to the United Nations and to Unitarian Universalist congregations around the world. We are committed to global equality and we support the United Nations in this endeavor. We left this year's seminar motivated and empowered to stand up for justice, spread knowledge, share our new skills, and make an impact on the world by being the change we want to see in the world.



*2013 Spring Seminar participants at the UN*

# Beyond LGBTQ: Sexuality and Gender Identity

## Terminology<sup>2</sup>

**This list includes some terms related to sexuality and gender identity that you may be less familiar with. This list is meant only as an introduction.**

**Assigned at birth (AAB):** A term that refers to the gender a person is assigned at birth, i.e. whether one is labeled male or female at birth. Some people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and are **cisgender** (abbreviated as cis), and others do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth and are **trans\***.

**Asexual:** Someone who does not experience sexual attraction to others. Some people who experience sexual attraction rarely may identify as **gray-asexual**.

**Bigender/Trigender/Pangender:** People who feel they are two, three, or all genders. They may shift between these genders or be all of them at the same time.

**Binarism:** Erasing, ignoring, or expressing hatred towards people who identify outside of the gender binary. Also supporting the incorrect idea that the only legitimate genders are male and female and ignoring all others.

**Cross dresser:** Someone who dresses as and presents themselves as a gender other than the one they typically identify with. Cross dressing can be purely aesthetic, sexual, a facet of someone's gender identity, or have other meanings. The term **transvestite** is often considered to be synonymous, but is usually derogatory and isn't preferred by most people today.

**Demisexual:** Someone who only experiences sexual attraction after developing an emotional connection with someone.

**Drag:** Taking on the appearance and characteristics associated with a certain gender, usually for entertainment purposes and often to expose the humorous and performative elements of gender.

**Dysphoria:** Unhappiness that can result when one is uncomfortable with the gender they are assigned at birth (sex). Some trans\* people experience dysphoria, some don't.

**Gender:** A complex combination of roles, expressions, identities, performances, and more which is assigned gendered meaning. Gender is self-defined as well as defined by our larger society and how gender is embodied and defined varies from culture to culture and from person to person.

**Gender attribution:** The act of categorizing people we come into contact with as men, women, or unknown. Gender attribution is questionable because it can lead to misgendering people unintentionally, since one can never know a person's gender identity just by looking at them.

**Gender expression:** How one expresses their gender outwardly and/or the facets of a person's expression which have gendered connotations in our culture. There is no right or wrong way to express one's gender.

**Gender identity:** An individual's internal sense of what gender they are. One's gender identity may or may not align with their assigned gender, and one's gender identity is not visible to others.

**Gender neutral pronouns:** Pronouns other than the usually gendered he or she. Some examples are ze/hir/hirs, and they/them/their but there are many others. It is good to ask people what their **preferred pronouns** are, use them, and apologize if you slip up.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.uua.org/lgbtq/identity](http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/identity)

**Gender nonconforming (GNC):** Not fully conforming to gendered social expectations in terms of expression, roles, or performance.

**Genderqueer:** An umbrella term for all gender identities other than male and female. It can include gender nonconforming people, non-binary people, and many others. As a specific identity, it can generally be understood as a gender between male and female or as a completely separate gender.

**Intersex:** A person born with any manner of supposed "ambiguity" in terms of gendered physical characteristics. This can include reproductive organs, genitals, hormones, chromosomes, or any combination thereof.

**Nonbinary Gender:** Gender identities that don't fit within the accepted binary of male and female. People can feel they are both, neither, or some mixture thereof.

**Pansexual:** Someone who is sexually, romantically, physically, or emotionally attracted towards persons of all gender identities and biological sexes.

**Polysexual:** Someone who is sexually, romantically, physically, or emotionally attracted to multiple genders and/or sexes.

**Pre-op/post-op/non-op:** These terms refer to what gender-related surgeries a person has had, plans to have, or does not want to have. **Pre-op** (pre-operative) means the person plans to or wants to have some form of gender-related surgery but has not yet, **post-op** means they already have had some form of gender-related surgery, and **non-op** refers to trans\* people who do not desire any gender-related surgeries. These terms should not be used to define a trans\* person nor should they be applied to trans\* people without their consent.

**Queer:** An umbrella term for people who identify outside of the societal norm for sexual orientation and/ or gender identity. The term has been used as an offensive slur, but some people have reclaimed it for themselves. You should not refer to someone as queer without their consent.

**Sex:** One's sex usually refers to the gender one was assigned at birth based on the gendered parts of one's body, such as genitals and sometimes chromosomes. The category of sex is still used in trans\* spaces but some are opposed to it, because they feel it genders people and their bodies non-consensually.

**Sexual orientation:** Refers to who one is sexually, emotionally, physically, or romantically attracted to. Gender identity and sexual orientation may affect one another but they are not the same. For example, the term transgender does not refer to sexual orientation; it refers to gender identity and/or expression, whereas terms such as lesbian, gay, and bisexual are examples of sexual orientations.

**Third Gender:** In some cultures third (and fourth and so on) genders may be commonly accepted alongside man and woman. Some people in western cultures may identify as third gender as well, however it's important not to erase the multitudes of genders present in the world.

**Transsexual:** This term often refers to binary trans\* people (trans men and trans women), or to trans\* people who physically transition in any way. While still a preferred term for many, some people dislike the term because of its connection to the medicalization of trans\* people and the focus it can put on physical transition.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression doesn't match the gender they were assigned at birth. The term **trans\*** has similar meaning, but shows a more inclusive attitude toward the multitude of people under the transgender umbrella.

**Transphobia:** The fear or hatred of trans\* people or those perceived as such.

## Think Globally, Act Locally

Although LGBTQ people in the United States and Canada have achieved many victories in recent years, including the legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada and the Defense of Marriage Act being ruled unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court, there is considerable progress still to be made for LGBTQ equality. Here is a list of some issues facing the LGBTQ community and ways that you and your congregation can get involved. This is not a comprehensive list in terms of issues or methods of involvement—work with your congregations and communities to research other issues requiring action and develop innovative activism strategies!

**Access to Health Care:** LGBTQ individuals, while facing many of the health problems of the broader population, must also contend with legal discrimination in access to healthcare, and a scarcity of social programs and health care providers suited to the unique culture and needs of the community. They suffer from higher rates of attempted suicide and homelessness among youth, and a higher risk of HIV and other STDs because of a lack of healthcare access (Healthy People). Upcoming fights regarding LGBTQ health care access include the need for violence prevention and data that accurately reflects the community's healthcare needs. Read about the Healthcare Equality Index, a resource for healthcare providers to improve their care for LGBTQ individuals, here: <http://www.hrc.org/hej>, then share the information with your community and healthcare provider.

**Bullying and Suicide:** According to a Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) school climate survey, about 61 percent of LGBTQ students reported feeling unsafe in school and 44 percent reported being physically harassed due to their perceived sexual orientation. Between 30 and 40 percent of LGBTQ youth have attempted suicide (Suicide Prevention Resource Center). Consider getting involved in your school district by talking to school officials about enforcing anti-bullying initiatives and creating a more accepting school climate for LGBTQ students. If they don't already exist, youth may want to create Gay-Straight Alliance clubs at their schools. Also make sure that your congregation is a safe space for all youth, regardless of sexual orientation—have discussions about bullying and LGBTQ issues in religious education, and pay attention to see if any youth are being excluded or bullied.

**Criminalization:** Although sexual orientation and gender identity are not explicitly criminalized by the United States' or Canada's criminal justice systems, LGBTQ people—especially LGBTQ people of color—are at increased risk for discriminatory policing and criminalization. Transwomen are commonly assumed to be sex workers and are subsequently subject to abuse by police (Queer (In)Justice). HIV criminalization laws, which make it illegal for HIV positive individuals to have sex without disclosing their HIV status, are enforced in many US states and Canada, and disproportionately affect LGBTQ people and people of color. Since many people are unaware of the problems caused to the LGBTQ community by our criminal justice system, education is a vital first step toward change. Read and discuss the book *Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States* with your congregation, and search news outlets for the most current information on HIV criminalization laws.

**Employment Discrimination:** The United States currently has no federal law prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Although some states and companies have passed their own laws, Congress has failed to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), making it legal for employers to fire LGB employees in 29 states and transgender employees in 33 states (Human Rights Campaign). While Canada has a federal law prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, employment discrimination based on gender identity is not covered. Consider writing to or calling your

federal government representatives and asking them to support federal anti-employment discrimination legislation, and creating a campaign at your congregation to work on this issue.

**Restroom Access for Trans\* People:** Trans\* people are often discriminated against in public restroom access—using the restroom that corresponds with their gender identity can lead to ridicule, violence, and arrest. This year, an Arizona lawmaker attempted to pass a bill requiring people to use public restrooms that correspond with the sex listed on their birth certificate or face six months in jail. Being denied or ridiculed for public restroom access can lead to severe psychological and physical harm for trans\* people—54 percent suffer adverse health effects from trying to avoid using public restrooms (Williams Institute, UCLA). In your congregation, make sure that trans\* people are able to use the restroom that corresponds with their gender identity without fear of harassment or violence. Gender-neutral restrooms are also a good idea, as long as trans\* people are not forced to use them. Also reach out to local businesses and other public establishments and ask them to ensure that their restrooms are accessible to trans\* people. The UUA has recently developed [resources around this topic](#) that can be helpful in your congregation and community.

**Poverty:** Transgender people are four times as likely to have a household income of under \$10,000 and twice as likely to be unemployed as the “average person” in the US (National Transgender Discrimination Survey). 24 percent of lesbian and bisexual women in the US are impoverished compared with 19 percent of heterosexual women (Williams Institute, UCLA). Higher rates of LGBTQ poverty are caused in part by the lack of federal employment discrimination protection and the lack of access in most US states to marriage and the economic benefits it provides. Contact your government representatives and advocate for employment and marriage equality, and volunteer at soup kitchens and other organizations that fight the effects of poverty in your community.

**Youth Homelessness:** According to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, between 20 and 40 percent of homeless youth (under age 18) in the US identify as LGBTQ. Consider supporting or volunteering for the [Ali Forney Center](#), which provides support to homeless LGBTQ youth in New York City. If you are not located near New York City, volunteer at a local homeless shelter and emphasize the need to address LGBTQ homelessness.

**A Note on Intersectionality:** No community or issue exists in a vacuum. LGBTQ individuals who are also members of other marginalized communities—people of color, women, etc.—are at higher risk for many of the issues addressed here, as well as many issues not mentioned. For example, African American same-sex couples are about three times more likely to live in poverty than white same-sex couples (Williams Institute, UCLA). Additionally, some parts of the LGBTQ community, including transgender and gender non-conforming people, are at higher risk for employment discrimination, criminalization, and other issues than many cisgender lesbian and gay people are. Consider bringing an LGBTQ perspective to all of the social justice work you do, and address the unique concerns that LGBTQ people face in your larger movement. If you are working on LGBTQ issues specifically, make sure to incorporate the concerns of LGBTQ people who are also members of other marginalized groups, and ensure that your work includes trans\* issues as well as gay and lesbian issues.

Spring Seminar 2013  
 2013 Intergenerational Spring Seminar Statement:  
*Sex, Love, and Violence: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in a  
 Globalized World*

**Whereas:**

Cultural and societal shifts often start with personal transformation;

Unitarian Universalism is a faith that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of all people and views love as sacred;

Our Unitarian Universalist values include the belief that differences strengthen our communities;

“Being yourself” is a form of advocacy;

There is a pervasive worldwide assumption that all people are heterosexual (heteronormativity);

There is a pervasive worldwide assumption that peoples' gender identities always match their biologically assigned sex;

There are real risks involved with “coming out” about having a marginalized sexual orientation and/or gender identity;

The United Nations has recently begun openly supporting and advocating for LGBTQ Human Rights;

Throughout the world, people are subject to violence, harassment, persecution, and institutionalized oppression based on their perceived or actual sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions;

Knowledge that momentous events of human rights movements vary from generation to generation and experience with these events provides a unique lens;

**We therefore resolve to:**

Combat discrimination and violence based on perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity;

Use a faith and value-based perspective to advocate for the support and protection of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities;

Be accountable for our own actions and words while striving to celebrate our authentic selves;

Act in solidarity with those whose sexual orientations and gender identities differ from societal norms;

Actively welcome all people at all stages of their personal journey, and to support their personal growth and choices;

Advocate for equality and strive for social justice;

Continue to support the United Nations' LGBTQ advocacy work and its commitment to stopping discriminatory policies;

Strive to ensure that all congregations become “Welcoming Congregations” which institutionalize proactive and welcoming measures for people who are marginalized due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression;

Affirm these experiences by engaging in intergenerational dialogue to create a just future for all of humanity.

## BECOME INVOLVED IN UU-UNO PROGRAM AREAS

### **EVERY CHILD IS OUR CHILD**

The Every Child Is Our Child (ECOC) Program is an initiative begun in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established by world leaders in 2000. The UU-UNO provides grant funding to the Manye Krobo Queen Mothers' Association in Ghana in support of ECOC which works to empower this local women's organization to care for children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. The program consists of offering essential resources and health care assistance to orphans and vulnerable children, enabling them to attend primary school in the Manye Krobo District in Ghana. Our partnership with the Queen Mothers Association and Queen Mothers of the district is essential to our success. ECOC directly contributes to the goals of achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, and combating HIV/AIDS. Additionally, ECOC gives priority to girls, in order to help promote gender equality. Finally, the program contributes to the fight against AIDS, since children are taught about HIV/AIDS prevention in school, starting in Grade 2. The ECOC Program provides real life opportunities to practice UU spiritual principles. By providing education to a threatened generation, we further affirm and promote the worth and dignity of every person.

<http://www.uua.org/international/action/children/>

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) and Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity (SOGI) HUMAN RIGHTS**

Over the past 40 years, UU congregations have become more aware and supportive of LGBTQ constituents. However, even members of the North American LGBTQ community and their allies are largely unaware of the dangers faced by LGBTQ individuals outside of North America. In over 80 countries, people can face criminal prosecution based on presumed sexual orientation or gender identity – sometimes with fatal consequences. Our program is dedicated to advocating at the UN for decriminalizing homosexuality around the world. Using its unique position at the UN as a leader within the ecumenical community, the UU-UNO works to garner support among the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), especially the faith-based community, to end criminal sanctions based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Additionally, the UU-UNO holds UN ECOSOC consultative status, allowing it to build consensus and coalition among other NGOs with consultative status to support decriminalization.

<http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/witness/international>

### **WOMEN: SECURITY and PEACE**

The Women: Security and Peace program promotes awareness and action through education and advocacy in three key areas:

- The effects of armed conflict on women
- The importance of women's role in peace-building and peace-keeping efforts
- Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the U.S. and international implementation

Our goal is to encourage the strong voices and actions of women as part of the peace building process. Through this program, the UU-UNO supports and advocates for the global implementation of key international agreements such as Security Council Resolution 1325 (affirms the importance of women in peacekeeping efforts) and CEDAW.

<http://www.uua.org/peace/women>

### **CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE**

In accordance with the UU-UNO's mission of promoting well-being, peace, and justice, the Climate Change Task Force sees a moral and ethical imperative to learn about global warming, and to act appropriately and decisively. As part of our efforts, we act in conjunction with the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development, CoNGO. Together we have produced a document entitled "Climate Change: A Discussion Paper," which was hand delivered to world leaders at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Conference, and at the Cancun Conference the year after. <http://www.uua.org/environment/climate/un/>

# HOW TO PLAN A UN SUNDAY

## 2013

The following guide to planning a United Nations Sunday at your congregation is adapted from the work of Sylvia Stuber Heap, who has been planning these services for almost 30 years. The UN Sunday theme follows our Spring Seminar theme which this year is LGBTQ Human Rights.

Set the date with the church, preferably around October 24<sup>th</sup>. The 2013 suggested date is October 20<sup>th</sup>. If you are unable to book this date for a service, consider having a post-service event in October and hosting the service on another date. Feel free to contact the office for further recommendations.

### Develop the theme

- Incorporate LGBTQ Human Rights into the sermon
- Guest speaker(s) - consider someone from the UU-UNO, Envoys, local LGBTQ community center, congregants, etc.
  - Do it yourself - speak as an Envoy on behalf of the UU-UNO and/or as a member of the congregation committed to the UU-UNO initiatives.
- Select readings, hymns, opening and closing. We will post readings throughout September by UU ministers on the [UN Sunday](http://www.uua.org/unsunday) portion of our website. [www.uua.org/unsunday](http://www.uua.org/unsunday)
- Include a special presentation (i.e. show a video)
- Organize a reception for after the service (perhaps an international pot luck)
  - Prepare special decorations, celebratory cake/food, and more information on the issue/theme

### Meet with the Church Worship Committee\*

- Develop/discuss an overview of the service
- Discuss publicity
  - Utilize church newsletter, newspaper, etc.
- Designate someone to decorate the altar
  - Photographs, audiotape, videotape
- Contact the organist and/or the Music Director
  - Discuss prelude, hymns, postlude, other music

\*If your congregation does not have a Worship Committee, delegate the above tasks to Planning team members.

### Meet with the RE Committee

- To get the children involved
  - Processional – for example use “Let There Be Peace on Earth” banners
  - Include a Children’s Story
  - Other involvement: passing out pencils, etc.; taking collection
- Email the parents about what the children are doing and when
- Invite teachers to incorporate sections from our “UN Me Religious Education Curriculum” into their classes a Sunday or two prior as well as on UN Sunday
- Contact the Youth Group advisors to ensure Youth are aware of their opportunity to participate in the planning and execution of this event.

### Make the Order of Service

- Plan the cover – contact us to get a digital copy of the UU-UNO Logo
- Work with your congregation's administrator on production
- Thank participants in the "Order of Service"
- Rehearse the Service
- "Choreograph" the service; practice moving from one segment to another
- If relevant and possible, have the guest speaker visit the church building
- Check on altar, microphones, video camera, and other audio equipment
- Rehearse the Service a second time if you can! You may find that there is something you want to change or add.

### On UN Sunday

- Be there early to:
  - Get water for the speaker(s)
  - Set up tape recorder, video camera; test microphones
  - Make sure the Religious Education participation is ready
  - Greet guests as they arrive
  - Ensure the camera(s) are fully charged and have memory available
- After the service, enjoy coffee hour/luncheon
- Introduce speaker(s) to members of the congregation
- Collect checks made out to the "UU-UNO"
  - Mark checks from donors who want to be sustaining friends of the UU-UNO
  - Make a list of individuals who made donations, to qualify for Blue Ribbon Award
- Work with church treasurer to add up the currency from the collection plate (if the collection plate isn't for the UU-UNO, be sure to remind people we are supported by their donations).
- Email the Envoy Coordinator ([kjacob@uua.org](mailto:kjacob@uua.org)) with your total money count and how many individuals donated.

### Follow-up

- **Compose a report of the service to send to the UU-UNO. This report should include:**
  - **A few photos**
  - **The number of individual checks (also include names, if you receive permission)**
  - **Total amount donated from collection plate (if applicable)**
  - **The Order of Service/Event program**
  - **A letter with any additional information you would like to share**
- Email or mail the UU-UNO the UN Sunday report about contributions collected and see if your congregation qualifies for a 2013 Blue Ribbon Award
- Upload/develop pictures of the service – if on Facebook, tag the UU-UNO and post on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/UU.UNO](http://www.facebook.com/UU.UNO))
- Write thank you notes to speaker(s), committee chairs, and others who contributed to the service
  - You can also enclose copies of photos of participants in the service
- Confirm with the Board about donating the offering to the UU-UNO
- Apply for the 2014 Dana Greeley Award ([www.uua.org/unsunday](http://www.uua.org/unsunday))
- **Celebrate!** You did a wonderful job.



*UU-UNO Director Bruce Knotts speaking at a UN Sunday Service*

## SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE

We recognize that each congregation has its own routine for Sunday morning gatherings, and we encourage you to use and modify the resources in this packet to fit your own congregation's needs. If your congregation is unable to hold a service, hold an event and/or fundraiser about the work of the UU-UNO on UN Sunday. For further inspiration, throughout September and leading up to UN Sunday we will post words and prayers from UU ministers on the UN Sunday portion of our website: [www.uua.org/unsunday](http://www.uua.org/unsunday).

Welcome, Introductions, Announcements: Use this time to introduce UN Sunday and the UU-UNO. Possibly have an Envoy introduce the service. Read *Singing the Living Tradition* #475: "We The Peoples of the United Nations"

Opening Words/ Chalice Lighting: *Singing the Living Tradition* Reading #561

Joys And Concerns: (if your congregation normally has them)

Opening Hymn: *Singing the Living Tradition* #151: "I Wish I Knew How"

Reading/ Story: Excerpt from "There Is No Hierarchy of Oppressions" by Audre Lorde  
[http://uuliveoak.org/pdfs/worship\\_9-04-09\\_excerpts\\_no\\_hierarchy\\_of\\_oppressions.pdf](http://uuliveoak.org/pdfs/worship_9-04-09_excerpts_no_hierarchy_of_oppressions.pdf)

Reading: *Singing the Living Tradition* Reading #560: "Commitment"

Sermon/ Homily: Some congregations choose to invite a **guest speaker** from a local university or local United Nations Association (UNA) Chapter, **show a short film or clip**, or have an **Envoy or the Minister deliver a sermon** about the UN Sunday theme. This is where to go into further detail about international human rights specifically pertaining to LGBTQ people.

Offering: The UU-UNO is supported financially by individual, family, and congregational contributions. We suggest holding the offering after the sermon so people will be excited about helping the UU-UNO. Some congregations choose to dedicate their offering on UN Sunday to support our vital mission, while others choose to contribute in their annual budget. We encourage you to decide the best way to support the UU-UNO.

Closing Hymn: *Singing the Living Tradition* #146: "Soon the Day Will Arrive"

Closing Words: *Singing the Living Tradition* Reading #457



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ACTIVITY

We encourage all congregations to fully engage all of their members in UN Sunday. Please refer to our Religious Education Packet, "UN Me" available on our website. Below, we have some suggestions specifically based around our 2013 theme: LGBTQ Human Rights.

### **Suggested Lesson Plan**

RE teachers should start by educating themselves through our resource section on current work of the UN on LGBTQ rights. Then draft a brief lesson for the children. After the lesson, engage the children in an activity/ craft. Possible suggestions for the craft are in our RE packet. Following the craft, we suggest reading a book. Please feel free to choose from the list below. (This is often a good time for a "snack.") A powerful way to end the class is to prompt the children to connect what they have learned to the seven UU Principles. With the UU Principles, children can identify which ones are directly related to the issues that people who identify as LGBTQ are facing today in America and throughout the world. Perhaps you can have guest speakers in October from the congregation (consider youth, young adults, adults, and seniors).

### **Suggested Books**

- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson. Ages 4 and up. Based on a true story about penguins in New York City's Central Park Zoo. Two male penguins cuddle and share a nest like other penguin couples, and they want to hatch an egg too. They have little luck until a zookeeper decides they deserve the chance to have their own family, and gives them an egg in need of nurturing.
- *The Different Dragon* by Jennifer Bryan. Ages 5 and up. The story of a boy with two moms, who creates a story about a dragon who doesn't want to be fierce anymore.
- *In Our Mothers' House* by Patricia Polacco. The oldest of three adopted children remembers her childhood with her two mothers in a lively, supportive neighborhood.
- *10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewert. The story of a male assigned at birth child, Bailey, who dreams of wearing dresses. No one, not even Bailey's parents, wants to hear about her dreams but, when Bailey meets a neighbor who is accepting of Bailey, they are able to make dresses together.

### **Activities/ Curriculum**

For additional RE resources, check out our website. The UU-UNO has developed two religious education curriculums: UN Me and Human Rights. The Human Rights curriculum includes a list of Religious Education activities appropriate for UN Sunday and any other Sunday during the year. <http://www.uua.org/international/engagement/re/230870.shtml>

## CONNECT TO THE UU-UNO

### **Include an International Perspective in your Congregation**

Does your congregation currently have a group focused on climate change? How about one working for immigrant justice? Between our advocacy programs and UN Non-Governmental Organizations committees, chances are that whatever your congregation's passion is, the United Nations Office is engaged with these issues as well. In the research, education, and advocacy of important issues addressed by your social action/ justice group, keep track of action being taken at the UN related to those issues.

<http://www.uua.org/un>    [unitednations@uua.org](mailto:unitednations@uua.org)

### **Become a UU-UNO Envoy for your Congregation**

Envoys are extremely valuable to the UU-UNO because they are the link between the Office and the global UU community. As an Envoy, you represent the UU-UNO within your local congregation while also letting us know what global issues your congregation is most passionate about and wants us to focus on. You connect your congregation to the UU-UNO and relay important information on current UN activities. You engage your congregation members in UU-UNO program initiatives and then plan events such as UN Sunday to promote UN education.

<http://www.uua.org/un/envoys>

### **Embrace Leadership as a Youth Envoy**

The Youth Envoy Program is a way for youth around the United States and Canada to incorporate personal, congregational, and UU beliefs in the worldwide efforts of the United Nations. The responsibilities include raising awareness of UN events within your congregation and planning discussions, fundraisers, and other international events to connect your youth group to the UU-UNO. In partnership with congregational Envoys, Youth Envoys raise visibility of the UN and our office so we can work together to make the world a safer and more just place.

<http://www.uua.org/un/youth/>

### **Participate in the Intergenerational Spring Seminar**

Every April, youth and adults gather in New York City for our exciting and educational Spring Seminar. All participants gain a deeper understanding on a topic of global concern and have a lot of fun. Past seminars have focused on water, poverty, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, and peacekeeping. The topic for 2012 was Beyond Borders: Breaking Barriers in Race and Immigration and 2013's theme was LGBTQ Human Rights. Both youth and adults attending the Spring Seminar take on important leadership roles in its planning and execution. Contact our office and download the Leadership Application for more information on how to participate in the next spring seminar. The 2014 seminar will focus on the rights of Indigenous Peoples with an emphasis on environment and sustainable development.

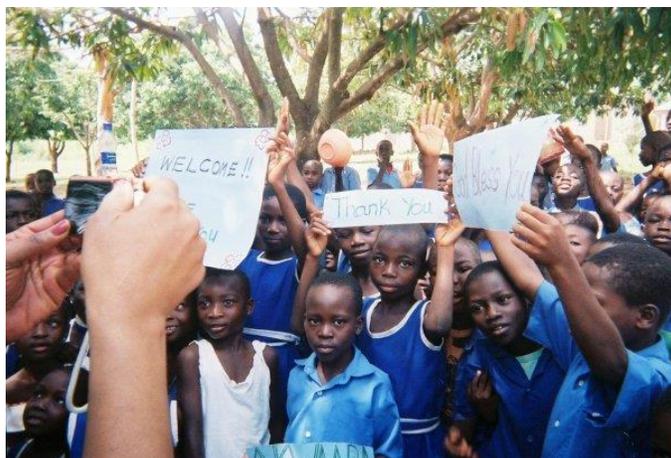
<http://www.uua.org/unspringseminar>

### **Consider the Internship Program**

The Internship Program provides people with an exciting opportunity to learn about the United Nations and to work in support of UN efforts to eradicate injustice, armed conflict and intolerance around the world. Interns at the UU-UNO conduct research, write blogs, participate in conferences, and much more. The talent and cultural diversity of our interns is evident in the various articles, video documentaries and web-page designs they have produced. Their contributions are invaluable. Contact Nickie Tiedeman, Intern and Office Coordinator, at

[unitednations@uua.org](mailto:unitednations@uua.org).

<http://www.uua.org/un>



*Every Child is Our Child students in Ghana*

## INSPIRE YOUR UU COMMUNITY

### **Enter the Annual Greeley Sermon Competition**

All UUs are invited to submit a sermon (or address) to the UU-UNO. The purpose of this annual award program is to encourage and to recognize UU principles, thought and action on a wide range of global issues as well as the role of the UN and our own UU-UNO. While all submissions will be considered, those highlighting the work of the UN and the UU-UNO will be given priority consideration. The winner will be awarded a cash prize of \$500 and will have the opportunity to deliver the sermon or address at the upcoming 2014 UUA General Assembly. See the website for more information about the guidelines for submission.

<http://www.uua.org/unsunday>

### **Become a Blue Ribbon Congregation**

United Nations Sunday is a great opportunity to increase support for the UU-UNO by helping your congregation achieve Blue Ribbon status. In order to do this, a congregation needs to:

1. Have an Envoy, Youth Envoy, or Envoy Team
2. Hold an annual UN Sunday service or event on UN Sunday
3. Have 5% of your congregation be contributing friends to the UU-UNO (or 15 people for larger congregations)
4. Have your congregation formally commit to annually giving the UU-UNO a budget line or collection plate.

Click to see the 2012-2013 list of Blue Ribbon Congregations: <http://www.uua.org/un/281593>

### **Hold an Intergenerational UU-UNO Fundraiser.**

The UU-UNO exists to provide a unique UU perspective at the United Nations. We depend on individual and congregational support. We ask for your involvement, your engagement and your enthusiastic financial support to help us change the world so that every person can enjoy a safe and dignified life. Consider holding a coffee house, dance, spaghetti dinner, international food fair, or craft sale to support our work. We also have our "FUNdraising Packet" we can send you per request or you can download on our website ([www.uua.org/un](http://www.uua.org/un)). This can be a fun opportunity to learn about an issue, build intergenerational community and raise necessary funds. You may submit donations online here: <https://giving.uua.org/uu-uno>

## **Envoy Report**

*Please take a few moments to consult with those involved in planning your UN Sunday and fill out this form. Your response will help us learn how congregations celebrate UN Sunday and how we can better support these initiatives. Please snail mail or email as soon as possible following your UN Sunday service and/or event.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

### **How You Celebrate UN Sunday—**

Our congregation celebrates UN Sunday annually. (please circle) YES NO

Our congregation supports the UU-UNO financially. (please circle) YES NO

Please provide a *description of your UN Sunday celebration.*

(Did you have a guest speaker? A video? A sermon by a lay leader or a minister?)

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Our congregation takes an intergenerational approach to UN Sunday. YES NO

Please provide *examples of what children, youth, and young adults do to celebrate UN Sunday.*

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### **Planning Process—**

When did you set the date for your UN Sunday Service? (MM/DD/YY)

Please *comment on the planning process.* (Materials used? Other ways we can assist you?)

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### **Resources from UU-UNO**

Resource Packet overall                      Great!                      Okay                      Needs Improvement

Please *comment on the resource packet.*

(Was it easy to understand and use? Which section is most helpful?)

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Thank you for completing this UN Sunday feedback form and for your ongoing commitment to peace, liberty, and justice for all. Please return this form to us by e-mail, mail or fax. We also encourage you to send us a copy of your Order of Service and photos from UN Sunday. Feel free to add additional comments on the back of this sheet.

### **Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office**

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